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STATE FOR EB/CBA DENNIS WINSTEAD
COMMERCE FOR FCS
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TAGS: [BEXP](#) [BTIO](#) [ENIV](#) [ABUD](#) [MV](#)

SUBJECT: MALDIVES: US PAVILION AT MAJOR MALDIVES TRADE SHOW A
SUCCESS

¶1. Summary: The US Pavilion at the Maldives Hotel and Trade Exhibition August 29-31, 2006 produced sales contracts, identification of local representatives, and increased awareness of products. Twelve US companies or their accredited partners exhibited under the US Pavilion at the Maldives' largest trade show. Exhibitors expressed satisfaction with the show's results, leading Post to expect even more exhibitors in the US Pavilion in 2007. End Summary.

Growing Range of U.S. Exports

¶2. A US food products exporter that was introduced to the Maldives market through the US trade fair in 2003, has since sold around \$2 million in this market, mainly apples and eggs. The company is now expanding its portfolio to include US packaged food and beverages subsequent to the interest expressed in brands it displayed at the US Pavilion. A \$2.5 million pilot wind power project received keen interest and could result in an \$80 million contract with the Maldives government.

Possible Bell Helicopter Sale

¶3. Additionally, the procurement of US-manufactured helicopters could be in the works. The local agent for Bell Helicopters, Infotechs Pvt Ltd, has been actively pursuing the sale of helicopters to the Maldives National Security Service (NSS). Currently Maldives has no helicopters, but is interested in a 15-passenger chopper and a smaller helicopter for training purposes. According to Infotechs, the Minister of Defense is convinced that the Maldives needs a Bell Helicopter for Medical Evacuation, Search and Rescue, and humanitarian flights in times of natural disasters. Infotechs believes only the Maldives President remains to be convinced in order for the USD 15 million sale to happen, and has requested Embassy advocacy to this end.

¶4. Beyond these larger leads from the fair, a company involved in commercial interior materials is on the verge of appointing a distributor, and the representative for E&J Gallo and Robert Mondavi (wines and liquors) met with potential buyers and is optimistic about expanding its market share in the resort islands. An IT company also received some prospective leads which could generate software contracts. This IT company is also in negotiations with the IBM representative in Maldives (another exhibitor in the US Pavilion) to represent the company in Maldives. Post also received inquiries and requests for information on a KFC franchise, Snapple, mineral water packing machinery, and desalinating equipment. The Regional Director of Cummins was also present at the fair; he made important contacts and reported considerable progress in his efforts to appoint a new local distributor.

Comment: BFIF Key to Success

15. Post greatly appreciates the contribution of Business Facilitation Incentive Funds (BFIF) for the ongoing success of US trade shows in Maldives, which have helped US companies access this new market. This was the first year in which the Embassy hosted a US Pavilion within a larger trade exhibition. The thousands of visitors to the Maldives Hotel and Tourism Exhibition represented roughly 2 to 3 percent of the capital's population. The block of twelve booths comprising the US Pavilion reflected the substantial growth of the Embassy Colombo-backed US trade presence in the Maldives since Post first started organizing a catalog show in 2000. With participating companies reporting exports sales, partnerships and serious trade leads, Post recommends continuation the US Pavilion at Maldives Hotel and Trade Exhibition in 2007.

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